

such insanity.<sup>1</sup> Courtenay became a firm adherent of the opposition.

In July Richard put himself at the head of his first military expedition, and marched to invade Scotland. As the result of an invasion of France might prove disastrous and humiliating, a military promenade across the Border was considered the best way to initiate the King in warfare. On such an occasion all men of note accompanied the army, and vied with each other in the splendour of their suites and the efficiency of their soldiers. Even the Duke of Lancaster, notwithstanding his threat of abstention, was with the vanguard in person. At the beginning of August the main body had reached Beverley in South Yorkshire, where they lay encamped for some days. Here a quarrel arose between the retainers of Sir John Holland, the King's half-brother, and of Sir Ralph Stafford, son and heir of the Earl of Stafford. Sir Ralph's man had slain the other, in self-defence as he averred. There was no chance that real justice would be done in such a case. It became, as a matter of course, a personal quarrel between their two masters. The question was only which nobleman had most power and most insolence. Sir Ralph Stafford, having told his man to run away until he had made good the case, rode out to find and appease Sir John Holland. Meanwhile Sir John, in a towering passion, was riding about the camp like a madman. The two happened to meet in a narrow lane after nightfall. \* Your servants have murdered my favourite squire/ cried Sir John, and without more words he drew his sword and struck Stafford dead from his horse. It was a wicked and unprovoked murder, but Sir John took it very lightly. \* I had rather have killed him than one of less rank,' he said, ' for I have the better revenged the loss of my squire/ He supposed that his close relationship to the King would prevent all trouble. Indeed, if the slain had been a common man, little more would have been heard about it. But Sir Ralph's father, being an Earl, went straight to the King and threatened to revenge himself, at whatever cost to the kingdom, unless he got justice. Richard was

<sup>1</sup> Higden, *ix.* 58-9 ; *Hon. Eve.*, 57-8 ; *Wals.* ii. 12a